



# Acquisition & Assistance Policy Directive (AAPD)

From the Director, Office of Procurement

Issued: October 31, 2003

## AAPD 03-10

### Prohibition on Requirement for Prior USAID-Specific Experience in Evaluation Criteria for Award of Agency A&A Instruments

Subject Category: Acquisition, Assistance  
Type: Policy

AAPDs provide information of significance to all agency personnel and partners involved in the Acquisition and Assistance process. Information includes (but is not limited to): advance notification of changes in acquisition or assistance regulations; reminders; procedures; and general information. Also, AAPDs may be used to implement new requirements on short-notice, pending formal amendment of acquisition or assistance regulations.

AAPDs are **EFFECTIVE AS OF THE ISSUED DATE** unless otherwise noted in the guidance below; the directives remain in effect until this office issues a notice of cancellation.

This AAPD:  Is New  Replaces/  Amends CIB/AAPD No: \_\_\_\_\_

Precedes change to:  AIDAR Part(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Appendices D&J  
 USAID Automated Directives System (ADS) Chapters 302&303  
 Code of Federal Regulations \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_  
 No change to regulations

Applicable to:  Existing awards; Modification required:  
 Effective immediately  
 No later than \_\_\_\_\_  
 As noted in guidance below  
 RFPs/RFAs issued on or after the effective date of this AAPD; all other Pending Awards, i.e., 8(a), sole source...  
 Other or N/A \_\_\_\_\_

New Provision/Clause Provided Herein:  Yes; Scheduled update to Prodoc: (insert date)  
 No

(SIGNATURE ON FILE)

TIM BEANS

**AAPD 03-XX: Prohibition on Requirement for Prior USAID-Specific Experience in Evaluation Criteria for Award of Agency A&A Instruments**

**PURPOSE:** This AAPD establishes an agency policy prohibiting the use of "prior USAID experience" as a minimum qualification or selective factor/evaluation criteria for award of agency acquisition and assistance instruments. This AAPD also provides guidance regarding appropriate substitute criteria.

**BACKGROUND:** The Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) part 6.101 provides that, as required in 10 U.S.C. 2304 and 41 U.S.C. 253 and with certain limitations, "contracting officers must promote and provide for full and open competition" in soliciting offers and awarding Government contracts. "Full and open competition," when used with respect to a contract action, means that all responsible sources are permitted to compete. In regards to assistance instruments, the Federal Grants and Cooperative Agreements Act states that federal agencies must "encourage competition in the award of grants and cooperative agreements" in order to identify and fund the best possible projects (ADS 303.5.5a).

Maximizing competition creates a broadening of the competitive base with opportunity for participation of an expanded number of organizations. The resulting benefits include an increased variety of services/funding alternatives available to federal agencies and more competitive pricing. The increased competitive base also contributes to the growth of American businesses and other organizations, and, more generally, to the overall health of the American economy.

Over the years, in efforts to identify highly qualified and responsive contractors and recipients, and ensure implementation of effective and efficient programs, solicitation documents (Requests for Quotes (RFQs), Proposals (RFPs), Applications (RFAs) and Annual Program Statements (APSS)) have begun to reflect increasingly restrictive minimum qualification and evaluation factors for award. Solicitation documents often specifically require "prior USAID experience" for an offeror/applicant to be minimally qualified for award. While the need for familiarity with the type of work typically executed through USAID instruments is understood, the agency must be careful to avoid requirements that are unduly restrictive and are contrary to the agency's commitment to promoting competition. Requiring specific "prior USAID experience" often unnecessarily eliminates many organizations that would otherwise be qualified and competitive, given other relevant work experience.

**POLICY:** Solicitation documents for award of USAID acquisition and assistance instruments must not contain minimum qualification or evaluation criteria/selective factors requiring "prior USAID experience".

This policy will apply to all solicitations for personal (PSC) and non-personal service contracts, supply contracts, and assistance instruments (grants & cooperative agreements). This policy will also apply to technical qualifications of key personnel, i.e., program managers, contract managers, and technical experts. Examples of appropriate language to include in solicitations to determine relevant work experience include:

Minimum qualification requirements:

- (insert # of years) relevant work experience
- (insert # of years) experience relevant to that in the scope of work/program description
- (insert # of years) experience in international economic development (or other specific expertise)

Evaluation Criteria/selective factors:

- Depth and breadth of relevant work experience
- Relevance of prior experience to that in the Statement of Work/Program Description

If used, the phrase "relevant work experience" will not be construed as being limited to "USAID" experience, rather, it will mean significant, related skills or knowledge in the desired sector, type of program, development activity, or specific area of professional expertise as described in the solicitation.

This policy applies to all RFPs and Requests for Applications RFAs issued on or after the effective date of this AAPD.

**POINT OF CONTACT:** Raquel Powell, Chief, Office of Procurement Policy Division, M/OP/POL, Phone: 202-712-0778, E-mail:rpowell@usaid.gov